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INFO LOG-00 ARA-01 OASY-00 DS-00 TEDE-00 ADS-00 SS-00
DSCC-00 /007W

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R 131434Z FEB 97
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5012
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//SCCC//
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 000783

E.O. 12958: DECL:02/10/07
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, AR
SUBJECT: STAFFDEL MACKEY CALLS ON PROVINCE OF
- BUENOS AIRES SECURITY OFFICIALS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0524

1. CONFIDENTIAL: CLASSIFIED BY THOMAS H. MARTIN,
ACTING DCM. REASON: 1.5(B).
2. (C) SUMMARY: WHILE FACT FINDING ON THE 1994
ATTACK ON THE ARGENTINE JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER (AMIA),
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STAFFDEL MACKEY CALLED ON PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES

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CIVILIAN SECURITY AND POLICE LEADERS TO EXPLAIN CONTINUING INTEREST BY THE U.S. CONGRESS IN SEEING MORE RAPID PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION. STAFFDEL UNDERSCORED MEMBERS' CONCERNS THAT INVESTIGATING JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO WAS NOT RECEIVING THE COMPLETE AND UNAMBIGUOUS SUPPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL POLICE. THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, DR. EDUARDO DE LAZZARI, ASSURED STAFFDEL THAT THE NEW POLICE LEADERSHIP WAS DEDICATED TO COOPERATION WITH THE JUDGE, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE RECENT CREATION OF A SPECIAL UNIT FOR THAT PURPOSE. LEADERS ALSO WERE UNDERTAKING ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES TO INVESTIGATE AND PUNISH OFFICERS WHO MIGHT HAVE PERIPHERAL CONNECTIONS TO THE CASE NOT WARRANTING CRIMINAL PROSECUTION. DE LAZZARI COMMITTED THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT TO OFFERING TESTIMONY AT ANY FUTURE IRC COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE AMIA INVESTIGATION. END SUMMARY.

3. (C) IN A CONSTRUCTIVE AND CORDIAL MEETING AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES POLICE IN LA PLATA ON JANUARY 24, STAFFDEL MACKEY CALLED ON DR. EDUARDO DE LAZZARI, RECENTLY APPOINTED PROVINCIAL SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, AND ADOLFO HUGO VITELLI, THE NEW CHIEF OF PROVINCIAL POLICE. DE LAZZARI AND VITELLI EACH WERE ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL OF THEIR KEY STAFF.

4. (C) FOLLOWING INTRODUCTIONS AND A SHORT EXPLANATION BY MR. MACKEY OF THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT,
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DE LAZZARI OFFERED THAT THE NEW POLICE LEADERSHIP WAS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE TARNISHED IMAGE OF THE INSTITUTION AND, TOWARD THAT END, WOULD BE WILLING TO OFFER TESTIMONY AT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE (IRC) HEARINGS ON AMIA, SHOULD THE COMMITTEE DECIDE TO CONDUCT A FOLLOW-UP TO THE SEPTEMBER 1995 HEARINGS HELD IN WASHINGTON. MR. MACKEY ACCEPTED THE OFFER AND DELIVERED COPIES OF THE 1995 HEARINGS RECORD TO DE LAZZARI AND VITELLI.

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5. (C) STAFFDEL UNDERSCORED THE INTEREST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN SEEING FASTER PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION. THE COMMITTEE HAD TAKEN NOTICE RECENTLY OF ALLEGATIONS IN THE PRESS THAT PROVINCIAL POLICE WERE NOT BEING FORTHCOMING AND COOPERATIVE IN ANSWERING JUDGE GALEANO'S REQUESTS, ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING LAST JULY'S ARREST OF FOUR HIGH-RANKING OFFICERS WHO HAD POSSESSION OF THE STOLEN VAN USED IN THE AMIA ATTACK JUST EIGHT DAYS PRIOR TO THE EXPLOSION. DE LAZZARI RESPONDED THAT HE AND CHIEF VITELLI HAD REDOUBLED THE POLICE'S EFFORTS IN THE AMIA INVESTIGATION SINCE BEING APPOINTED LAST YEAR. THEY HAD CREATED, FOR EXAMPLE, A SPECIAL UNIT TO ASSIST IN THE INVESTIGATION THAT WOULD RESPOND DIRECTLY TO JUDGE GALEANO'S REQUESTS. DE LAZZARI OFFERED TO HAVE THE LAWYER HEADING THAT UNIT, DR. LUIS VICAT, BRIEF THE STAFFDEL AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ON PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF THE CASE (SEE PARA 7).

6. (C) DE LAZZARI DESCRIBED THE EXTENSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES HE HAD INITIATED OVER THE LAST
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FEW MONTHS TO DEAL WITH THE TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS
CONFRONTING THE 46,000-MEMBER POLICE FORCE: CORRUPTION
AND POORLY QUALIFIED OFFICERS. IN ANY GIVEN WEEK, DE
LAZZARI SAID, THERE ARE MORE THAN 800 OPEN
ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS, AND ON AVERAGE 32
OFFICERS PER WEEK WERE DISMISSED OR FORCED TO RETIRE.
ON AMIA SPECIFICALLY, THE FOUR OFFICERS JUDGE GALEANO
HAD ORDERED ARRESTED LAST JULY HAD JUST BEEN FORMALLY
TERMINATED FROM EMPLOYMENT AFTER LENGTHY INTERNAL
INVESTIGATIONS. THE OTHER 14 OFFICERS INITIALLY
ARRESTED BY GALEANO BUT LATER RELEASED WERE ALSO UNDER
INTERNAL INVESTIGATION AT THIS TIME; HE CAUTIONED THAT
RUSHING TO CLOSURE ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE END MIGHT BE
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE IN THAT THE PRESSURE TO BREAK THE
"CODE OF SILENCE" (OFFICERS CONSPIRING TO PROTECT EACH
OTHER) WOULD NECESSARILY LESSEN ONCE INTERNAL
INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES CLOSED.

7. (C) AT THE INVITATION OF DR. DE LAZZARI, THE HEAD

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OT THE SPECIAL UNIT TO ASSIST THE AMIA INVESTIGATION,
DR. VICAT, THEN BRIEFED THE STAFFDEL. THE NEW TEAM
WILL ESSENTIALLY BE AT JUDGE GALEANO'S DISPOSAL FOR
FOLLOWING INVESTIGATIVE LEADS, COLLABORATING WITH
OTHER TEAMS OF INVESTIGATORS FROM THE FEDERAL POLICE
AND THE INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT (SIDE). ASKED BY THE
STAFFDEL IF IT WOULD HAVE AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE ALL
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MATTERS BROUGHT BEFORE IT, VICAT -- WITH SOME
UNEASINESS AT SAYING SO IN FRONT OF THE SENIOR POLICE
LEADERSHIP -- SAID THAT HE WOULD INDEED HAVE
INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY TO PURSUE ANY LEADS.

8. (C) COMMENT: THE STAFFDEL'S MESSAGE -- THAT THE
U.S. CONGRESS IS FOLLOWING CLOSELY ALL DEVELOPMENTS IN
THE AMIA CASE AND IN PARTICULAR THE PROVINCIAL
POLICE'S COMMITMENT TO FURTHERING THE INVESTIGATION --
WAS RECEIVED LOUD AND CLEAR BY THE NEW PROVINCIAL
SECURITY LEADERSHIP. THE OFFER TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY
IN FUTURE IRC HEARINGS AND THE WELL-ORCHESTRATED
PRESENTATION BY THE SPECIAL UNIT COMMANDER WERE
DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT COMMITMENT, BUT DE
LAZZARI'S PROMISE COULD EASILY BE ABROGATED BY THE
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ONCE HEARINGS BECOME A DISTINCT
POSSIBILITY. WE NOTE THAT EMBASSY'S REPEATED EFFORTS
TO SECURE AN APPOINTMENT FOR THE STAFFDEL WITH THE
VICE-GOVERNOR OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE WERE POLITELY
IGNORED -- TWO FAKES FROM THE EMBASSY MYSTERIOUSLY
"DISAPPEARED" AND PHONE CALLS WERE NOT RETURNED --
UNTIL AFTER STAFFDEL'S DEPARTURE FROM ARGENTINA. WE
ALSO NOTE THAT THE SPECIAL AMIA UNIT HEADED BY VICAT
WAS RECENTLY DIVERTED TO ASSIST WITH THE INVESTIGATION
INTO THE MURDER OF PHOTO-JOURNALIST JOSE LUIS CABEZAS,
SUGGESTING LESS THAN COMPLETE COMMITMENT TO JUDGE
GALEANO'S DIRECTION.

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